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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MUSCAT 000297

SIPDIS

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DEPT. FOR: DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/NEA, NEA/ARPI

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TAGS: ASEC PTER MU EAC

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO SECURITY ENVIRONMENT PROFILE

QUESTIONNAIRE (SEPOQ)

REF: SECSTATE 23078

Classified By: Ambassador Richard L. Baltimore III, U.S. Embassy Muscat
, Oman.
Reason: 1.5(b)(c)(g).

The responses listed below are keyed to the Security Environment Profile Questionnaire, dated 02/08/2005 (reftel).

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

11. (SBU) DEMONSTRATIONS:

A. (SBU) Yes, there are ethnic and religious communities in Oman that are capable of carrying out significant anti-American demonstrations. However, as noted below, the Omani government exercises significant control over all polities in the country.

B. (SBU) No, there have been no/no anti-American demonstrations in Oman within the last 12 months.

C. (SBU) No, in previous years, Royal Oman Police (ROP) forces successfully kept any demonstrations away from the Embassy.

D. (SBU) In previous years, the average size of any anti-war demonstration has been 50 to 100 demonstrators.

E. (SBU) Yes, the most recent demonstrations (in February and March 2003) were directly related to military action in Iraq.

F. (SBU) Demonstrations have been peaceful, with no reports of property damage or harassment of bystanders.

G. (U) N/A

H. (U) N/A

I. (SBU) Yes, there was a peaceful organized gathering by teachers to protest the lack of promotions. This peaceful protest took place near one of the Sultan's rural palaces while he was present.

J. (U) N/A

K. (U) N/A

L. (U) Peaceful

M. (U) N/A

12. (SBU) MACRO CONFLICT CONDITIONS:

A. (SBU) No, Oman is not/not currently engaged in an interstate or intrastate conflict.

B. (U) N/A

C. (U) N/A

D. (U) N/A

13. (SBU) HOST COUNTRY CAPABILITIES:

A. (SBU) Yes, Omani law enforcement agencies are professional and well-trained.

B. (SBU) Yes, Omani law enforcement agencies have been trained by U.S. agencies. For example, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Office of Anti-Terrorism Assistance and the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) continue to sponsor a number of training opportunities for the ROP and other Omani security services. The training has been effective in operations related to forensic DNA analysis, border security, interdiction of terrorists, and mass casualty/weapons of mass destruction response.

C. (SBU) No, Omani law enforcement agencies are not confronted with serious, widespread corruption inside their agencies.

D. (SBU) Yes, Omani intelligence services are professional and capable of deterring terrorist actions.

E. (C) Yes, Omani intelligence services have been cooperative with Embassy requests for information and support.

F. (U) See Section 6.

G. (SBU) Yes, the Omani government has been very responsive to Embassy requests for protective security.

H. (SBU) The Embassy assesses the overall security at major airports in Oman as "very good."

I. (SBU) The Embassy assesses the effectiveness of customs and immigration control agencies as "effective."

J. (SBU) The Embassy assesses the effectiveness of border patrol forces as "effective." However, Oman's porous borders, as well as its extensive coastline, present a

significant challenge for the ROP to control with the limited resources available to them.

INDIGENOUS TERRORISM

14. (SBU) ANTI-AMERICAN TERRORISM GROUPS:

1A. (SBU) The Embassy has no/no information indicating that indigenous, anti-American terrorist groups are present in Oman.

1B. (U) N/A

1C. (U) N/A

1D. (U) N/A

1E. (U) N/A

1F. (U) N/A

1G. (U) N/A

1H. (U) N/A

15. (SBU) OTHER INDIGENOUS TERRORIST GROUPS:

1A. (SBU) The Embassy has no/no information indicating that other (not anti-American) indigenous terrorist groups are present in Oman.

1B. (U) N/A

1C. (U) N/A

1D. (U) N/A

1E. (U) N/A

TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

16. (SBU) TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST INDICATORS:

1A. (S/NF) The Embassy has no/no information indicating that foreign terrorist groups maintain an active presence in Oman. However, given the level of al-Qa'ida activity in the Arabian Peninsula, the existence of some individuals or small cells cannot be ruled out. This is especially true due to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) rules which facilitate the movement of GCC nationals among member states. In 2004, two separate - and previously unknown - al-Qa'ida-associated terrorist cells were taken down in Oman. The arrests are believed to have derailed the cells' ongoing plots, one of which was aimed at U.S. interests in Oman, to include the U.S. Embassy.

1B. (U) N/A

1C. (U) No, the Omani government actively pursues all threat information.

1D. (U) N/A

1E. (U) N/A

1F. (S/NF) The EAC assesses the level, intent, and scope of hostile intelligence services in Oman, relative to potential anti-American terrorist acts, as low. Moreover, the few hostile intelligence agencies that are represented in country are closely monitored by the Omani intelligence services.

1G. (S/NF) Explosives are not generally available in Oman. Weapons are difficult to obtain, but it is common and traditional for many people living in the interior to own firearms (mostly long rifles with some AK-47's). The porous borders, as well as the extensive coastline, present vulnerabilities for the importation of weapons and explosives into Oman.

BALTIMORE